VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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DRAFT SIX-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PUBLIC MEETING

Fairfax County Government Center 12000 Government Center Parkway Fairfax, Virginia

Wednesday, May 3, 2006 7:30-9:00 p.m.

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. HOMER: My name is Pierce Homer. I'm the Chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and it's my pleasure to chair the meeting tonight, the purpose

of which is to receive public comment on the Draft Sixyear Improvement Program that was presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board just a week and a half ago.

I would like to acknowledge other members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board who are here tonight: Judy Connally, Butch Davies, Butch is back there. Butch represents the Culpepper District, and a former member of the General Assembly.

Our newest member, Doug Koelemay, who will soon become the best friend of everyone in this room, a Northern Virginia representative to the Transportation Board. Welcome, Doug.

Mary Lee Carter, from the Fredericksburg District, and formerly on the Spotsylvania Board, with a good local government background, which many of us have.

Bob Sevila, an urban at-large, and also with a local government background here today.

I would also like to acknowledge Corey Hill. Corey is the acting Director of the Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and in that capacity, he serves on the Commonwealth Transportation Board, along with Mr. Greg Whirley.

Greg, if you could raise your hand, Greg is the acting Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, and immediately to his left is Dennis Morrison. Dennis is the Northern Virginia District Administrator. So all these angry phone calls that come into our office go to Dennis.

I'd also like to acknowledge the Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Scott Kasprowicz. Welcome, Scott.

I would like to give just a brief overview of the Six-Year Improvement Program and then immediately move into public commentary. Next slide, please.

The Six-Year Program, and I hope folks can read this, the working draft. That's what this is. This is a working draft to be adopted at the June meeting of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

It is a smaller program than what we have today, particularly -- and I mentioned local government -- in the areas that affect local government the most. And that's a function of how our funding has worked.

In the primary highway system there's about a 20% reduction, urban and secondary about a 40% reduction, and transit capital reimbursement rate is at a historic low of 21%.

Now, there are processes prescribed to how we developed the Six-Year Program. Most of you know we do not yet have a budget adopted in the General Assembly. Absent that, we fall back on the official revenue projections that were adopted last November. That's the forecast that underlies this Six-Year Program. We are required by law to adopt a Six-Year Program by the first of July.

So one of the things today that has been mentioned, for example, is coming back in a special session in August or September. We have a legal mandate to adopt our program by the 1st of July.

Let me tell you why these two provisions are in the State Code. Four years ago, there was a Six-Year Program that was adopted on a Tuesday in December, and the following Thursday a governor's budget was released that had completely different revenue assumptions, and the result was about \$2.7 billion over the life of the Six-Year Program, and so the General Assembly adopted legislation recommended by the Warner Administration to require the use of official revenue estimates. It's a very important and it seems common-sense practice, but that's one of the reasons why these provisions are in state law. Secondly, that it be adopted by July 1st at the beginning of the state fiscal year.

On the next slide, we can talk about some of the reasons for that decline. First, we all know as gas prices go up, the revenues derived from the gas tax go down, about \$221 million.

On the cost side of the equation, that dollar goes not nearly as far as it did. So for example, just in the last six to nine months, asphalt costs alone have increased I believe it's 34%, with significant increases in cement, steel, all of our basic commodities, and here in Northern Virginia real estate has been experiencing a comparable rate of inflation.

That affects our maintenance budget, and so you will see an increase in the maintenance budget to the tune of \$362 million dollars. Those are dollars that come

right off the top of the construction program and go into maintenance, and if there's one aspect of transportation funding on the highway side that drives these numbers, it's the ever-growing cost of maintaining our existing highway infrastructure.

That increases each and every year. We take about 200 miles of road into the state system every year. Those have to be plowed, those have to be re-paved, and that cost grows inexorably by about \$50 million a year, and that's money that comes out of the construction program.

Turning to the next slide, federal revenues are up. We just had a highway bill passed and a transit bill passed; wonderful. In the current program there is about a \$136 million increase in federal revenues, but \$127 million of that are designated for specific projects.

In fact, in the recently-enacted, two-year legislation, 75% of the new federal money is for earmarked projects and not available to our core programs like urban roads, secondary roads, primary highways.

Turning to the next slide is our reality. We face a situation of declining revenues, rising costs and increasing maintenance needs, and those three factors result in a reduced construction program.

The impact I mentioned previously, the primary system of highways over the Six-Year period will be reduced 20% from today's funding, secondary road construction by 38%, and urban streets by 41%. That is \$870 million dollars over the life of the Six-Year program. It will take \$870 million over the next six years simply to get back to where we are today.

On the public transit side, the reductions are equally as severe. Again, this goes to the local level where state funds are used to match federal dollars and to reimburse. The way it works, localities lay out their money, the feds pay something and the state is supposed to kick in, and the code says up to 95%. And that percentage rate of reimbursement has been dropping steadily every year to this year at 21%, the lowest it has ever been.

And I know, Mr. Chairman, we're going to hear from you in your testimony your locality makes a long-term decision to invest in transit capital based on a certain level of state reimbursement. We are not under these

financial circumstances a reliable investment partner, and that is one of the challenges we face with this program.

Turning to the next slide, I won't go into the details. This presentation is available on the website, but it does show the comparisons, and you can see reductions in primary, secondary, urban and transit.

Let me just summarize the key points on this. This is a working draft. If the General Assembly comes together with a budget, perhaps there will be additional revenues. By law, we have to only use the official revenue estimates that date back to November. We have to adopt a program by July the 1st.

And importantly, even if the budget were adopted today, think about the climbing revenues, a function of increasing gas prices, rising costs and rising maintenance needs, those conspire to reduce the highway construction program.

On the transit side of the house, which is so critical here in Northern Virginia, what we are doing is continuing this long, slow, historical trend of diminishing state support for transit capital, and you see that reflected in the Program.

So when the Commonwealth Transportation Board -- they did not take action on this, they accepted it, there was a moment of silence. That was the reaction.

With that brief introduction, I would like to call on Chairman Connolly, who I know will be speaking on behalf of both Fairfax County and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

Welcome, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CONNOLLY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Good evening and welcome to Fairfax County, members of the Board. It's great to see some old friends here, and I want to welcome Doug Koelemay, the newest member of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and my good friend Mary Lee Carter, who is here tonight. She and I served for a long time on the Banco Board. And of course, my cousin, Judy Connally. Some people thought we were married, but she spells her name with and "A," and I with an "O."

Anyway, welcome here tonight, and I want to thank you so much for having this hearing on the Six-Year Program from 2007-2012.

I'd like to begin by thanking you for including some of the projects which we requested for funding last November, especially continuation of funding for the Dulles Corridor Express Bus Service, at \$6.6 million a year through the program; \$824,000 for the operating costs of a new bus service along the Richmond Highway corridor, an increasingly important corridor; restoration of funding for preliminary engineering, right of way, acquisition and construction for the all-important I-66/I-495 Interchange Reconstruction Project, a very dangerous place.

Inclusion of full funding -- thank God -- for the Route 29/Gallows intersection, including an increase in the total cost from \$75 million to \$77 million. Dennis, let's get this done.

For the region, continuation of state matching funds for federal CMAQ funds projects.

On September 26, the Fairfax County Board reviewed and approved the County's recommended priorities for VDOT's FY 2007 through 2012 Six-Year Program. These were provided to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the Department in testimony in written form on November 10th. These priorities are consistent with and help implement the Northern Virginia 2030 Transportation Plan.

We fully understand the fiscal situation the state is experiencing currently, and that it is difficult to provide funding for all of the projects requested in the Program. In addition, we acknowledge that the CTB is in a difficult position due to the lack of final General Assembly action on a state budget and a transportation funding package, and it is our fond hope that they will do their job.

However, we have significant concerns about many of the projects identified in the previous Programs within Fairfax County or included in the Board's priority list that have been removed, rescheduled, reduced in funding, or for which no action has been taken.

After a review of the Draft Six-Year Program, we have the following comments that are of particular concern to our Board.

First, there are three projects that are part of the Board of Supervisors' Four-Year Transportation Program, approved unanimously by my Board on February 9,

2004, and subsequently approved, in part, by the voter's overwhelmingly with 78% approval on the November 2, 2004, transportation bond referendum in this county.

Since the Board approved the program, county staff has met on numerous occasions with VDOT staff to develop a joint plan to implement this capital program as quickly as possible.

The County has committed a significant amount of its own money and resources to ensure a timely completion of these and other projects in that Four-Year Plan, and is concerned about the reduction in funding shown in the Draft Six-Year Plan for them.

The first project is the request for state assistance for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Infrastructure Renewal Program, known as "Metro Matters." This \$1.5 billion capital program over the next six years is needed to ensure that the region's significant transit investments are protected and continue to provide the mobility and air-quality benefits critical to our region.

While \$123 million is still required as our share over the next six years for "Metro Matters," no funding is included in the state program, as the Secretary just referred to in terms of transit funding.

We again request the CTB's help in providing funds to meet these Metro obligations, and we remain hopeful that the General Assembly will do the right thing in realizing the importance of Metro to this region.

The second project from the Board's Four-Year Transportation Program is the Richmond Highway Public Transportation Initiative. Again, we'd like to thank VDOT for including the \$824,000 request for operating costs.

However, in addition to the operating costs component, the capital improvement costs for this initiative are \$55 million. So far the County has identified 31.1 million of those costs, with \$23.8 million still needed to implement these improvements.

The Richmond Highway Corridor was important before BRAC, but after the base realignment and closure recommendations, the largest single impact of the world in terms of additional employment was right here in Fairfax County, Fort Belvoir, in the world. 21,500 new jobs come through Fort Belvoir. The only way of getting in there is

Route 1 or the Fairfax County Parkway. We need your help in both.

So we've got to enhance transit in that corridor to be moving military personnel to and from Fort Belvoir, which is already the largest employer in Fairfax County, by the way.

The third Four-Year Transportation Program project of concern is the widening of Stringfellow Road from Route 50 to Fair Lakes Boulevard. Dennis and Bill and others from VDOT had a public information meeting last night, very well attended, talking about this. To date, however, Fairfax has advanced \$3 million in bond funds and has set aside an additional \$13 million of our money to be advanced to VDOT upon receipt of work completed for preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction, in order to move this project forward expeditiously.

Our request is to have the county's funds identified in the program, as well as to have state funds restored so that the project can be completed on schedule. The consequences of not continuing this important project will result in the escalation of costs similar to the 29/Gallows Road project. The more we delay, the more right-of-way costs go up, the more construction costs go up, as Secretary Homer was pointing out in his presentation, and the ability to get it done moves further and further away.

Some other projects of concern: Route 7 widening from Rolling Holly Drive to Reston Parkway. State funds were cut by \$8 million in the program and the project completion date pushed back to FY 2012 from originally planned FY 2009. Obviously, providing funds to fully fund this project again would be great in the Final Program.

Route 29 widening from Shirley Gate Road to Old Centreville Road, preliminary engineering and accrual of funds for construction. This entire project, including \$3.4 million in revenue sharing funds previously allocated was removed from the Program. Obviously, we'd like it retained in the Final Program in recognition of the fact that the project remains actively under the design by Fairfax County Government using previously allocated funds.

Route 50 widening from 28 to Poland Road; there is a reduction of \$6.9 million for the accrual of funds for PE, right of way and construction cut throughout the program. We request restoration of these funds.

The Virginia Railway Express Burke Centre Station EZ Bus Shuttle Service received no additional funds in the program. We are requesting \$1.2 million for the service in FY 2007.

This is particularly critical to address increasing VRE ridership. We're bumping up against capacity every single day. The capacity of VRE is 16,600 riders. We're getting that every single day, and Metro -- I know Chris Zimmerman (ph.) is here somewhere -- where are you? There he is. He's going to tell you that a week or two ago, three of the largest 20 days in the history of Metro were two weeks ago. Nothing in particular, just bumping up against limits because of the gas prices and people flocking to transit in this region.

We're now building at our expense a new parking garage at VRE. We've got to have the shuttle service if we're going to maintain uninterrupted service and keep people using public transit and out of their cars.

The I-66/Vienna Metrorail Station Access Ramp at Vaden Drive project is not listed currently in the Six-Year Program, although there is \$3.8 million in federal funds already approved for this \$30 million project. It needs to be included in the Program to allow VDOT staff to undertake design activities.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board has already approved this project for inclusion in the TIP.

This project is critical for the development of enhanced bus service in the I-66 corridor, as well as for enhancing the efficiency and safety of bus service that serves that Vienna Metrorail station by eliminating serious weaving problems on I-66 to try to get over.

We request that this project by included in the Program reflecting available funds and that additional funding be provided to address the safety and efficiency of bus service issues at the station.

Important to remember that at the Vienna Metrorail Station, over 16,000 boardings occur there every

morning. That's as big as almost anything in the system; isn't it, Chris? You know, it's really critical that we have this kind of bus connection.

Finally, as part of the Richmond Highway Location Study for Fairfax and Prince William Counties, the Board request that the CTB fund a transit corridor study between the Huntington Metro Station and a planned Army museum at Fort Belvoir.

In addition to the BRAC process I talked about, the Army is planning to build an Army museum at Belvoir, and if it is as successful as they think it could be, you could get seven or eight million visitors to that new Army museum they're planning every year.

Finally, the Washington metropolitan region exceeds the federal air-quality standards for ground-level ozone. It is designated as "Moderate Non-attainment" for the eight-hour ozone standard.

It's vitally important to the region that measures be taken to mitigate air quality, reduce the amount of air pollutants emitted in the region, and fund those projects in the Transportation Improvement Program and the Constrained Long Range Plan that will allow the region to comply with new eight-hour ozone and particulate matter budgets.

Examples of such projects are the construction of HOT lanes in the Beltway, the widening of Route 7 between the Loudoun County line and Fairfax and the Dulles Toll Road, and construction of an interchange at the Fairfax County Parkway and Fair Lakes Parkway, not far from here, to replace the current at-grade intersection which is one of the worst in Fairfax County, which is saying something.

So anyhow, that's the Fairfax County presentation. Send more money. We need your help.

MR. HOMER: Chairman, before you put on your NVTC hat, for the benefit of the audience, the Chairman is talking about cuts in the interstate and primary and transit programs.

What has not been talked about are reductions in the secondary program, which I know your Board needs to undertake. That is where some of our largest reductions are.

I don't know if the Board has taken a position

on what some of those projects might be, but it might be helpful to just mention a few of those, if you know them or if you want to communicate them.

MR. CONNALLY: We haven't done that analysis yet, Mr. Secretary, but we will. Absolutely.

MR. HOMER: Thank you.

MR. CONNALLY: Thank you.

Mr. Secretary and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, thank you for your indulgence. I'm going to give a second piece of testimony more briefly on behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, on which I serve as Chair this year.

We understand the Plan you've provided recognizes the absence of an approved state budget for 2007 and beyond. Your hands have been tied by the inaction of the General Assembly. I wish to share with you the pain that your proposed Plan holds, however, in store for the quality of life for the residents of Northern Virginia, our region's economy and the economic well-being of the entire Commonwealth.

I'll focus tonight on the consequences of a lack of sufficient funding for public transit, although the severe cuts in planned highway construction obviously are of concern, as I've just talked about in the previous testimony.

Let me get right to the essential points. The Commonwealth has failed to pay its fair share to support transit, and the most recent constrained estimates outlined in the new Draft Six-Year Program impose further hardships.

Secondly, the General Assembly must snap out of its stupor and reach an acceptable budget agreement that increases public transit funding substantially. The Commonwealth's statutory target for transit assistance is 95% of operating in capital costs, net affairs and federal aid.

This proposed Six-Year Program achieves 21% for capital costs in FY 2007 and 47% for eligible net operating costs, far below the statutory target. The 21% capital matching ration is down from 63% in FY 2006. That has dramatic consequences on local government up here in Northern Virginia, and it's now forecast to remain near 21% through at least FY 2009, absent action by the General

Assembly.

The operating match for FY 2007 drops a substantial 10% from just last year. Here's what that means for NVTC's jurisdictions for 2007 alone: We must pay an astounding \$160 million more dollars for public transit in the five NVTC jurisdictions supporting WMATA, the compact jurisdictions.

Compared to last year, local funding for transit in FY 2007 must increase here by 85%, \$90 million. Our local governments have already adopted their respective budgets based on the reasonable expectation that state aid would flow and would at least remain steady at FY 2006 levels.

Where are we supposed to find an extra \$90 million? We may need to turn to massive service cuts and fair increases. That's exactly the wrong thing to do while gas prices are soaring and commuters are crowding onto public transit systems to seek relief.

I might add that in both Metro and VRE, we're already one of the highest fare box recovery systems in the country, so there's some limit to how much higher we can go.

We depend here more than in any other region of the Commonwealth on effective public transit. As of fiscal year 2005, there were over 438,000 transit trips taken in Northern Virginia on an average weekday. Let me repeat that: 438,000 transit trips per day in Northern Virginia. In fact, the use of transit is going up in Northern Virginia, not down.

Our transit systems are also very efficient, carrying 75% off all statewide transit ridership, with 66% of the 1,615 transit vehicles, 57% of the 71 million annual transit revenue miles operated, and 35% of the 6.5 million annual transit vehicle hours.

Northern Virginia's own level of effort, fares, local and regional taxes to support transit is already far greater than anywhere else in the Commonwealth, as we cover 65% of our transit expenses from local sources. The rest of the Commonwealth's local governments cover 36% of their transit expenses.

From FY 2001 through FY 2005, our local spending on transit grew ten times as fast as the state transit formula assistance we received, 52% versus 5.2%.

Our Metro jurisdictions per capita local effort -- and this is really important for the Commonwealth Transportation Board I think to put into perspective the transit needs of a region so heavily dependent now on transit.

We spend on the local effort to support transit an average of \$208 per capita. The next closest in the Commonwealth of Virginia to us is Hampton at \$20 and Richmond \$16.

So when people say, "Well, you've go to do your fair share," our citizens, our taxpayers are doing far more than their fair share, far more than any other jurisdiction by a factor of ten in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We need relief.

By failure to reach a budget agreement, the General Assembly is failing not only Northern Virginia's transit systems, but jeopardizing the Commonwealth's entire economy. Gridlock here affects our ability to compete for jobs, and Northern Virginia's jobs create 50% more state taxes per job than anywhere else in the Commonwealth, combined state sales and income taxes of \$3,400 per job in Northern Virginia versus an average of \$2,300 statewide.

VRE's jurisdictions have just agreed to buy 50 new railcars, but without the Commonwealth's promised \$15 million from the FY 2007 budget, the deal could fail. That means more crowding on VRE and potential transit riders forced back onto congested highways because we're bumping up against capacity.

Finally, we need a dedicated source of funding for Metro to avoid losing the \$1.5 million Congress has put on the table. Congressman Davis has a piece of legislation that says, "If the Metro Compact Members in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia match this, I'll give you \$1.5 billion over the next ten years."

We need to come up with \$150 million to match \$150 million in federal dollars every year for ten years. The District of Columbia just signed legislation committing its \$50 million. Maryland has legislation pending. We have legislation pending.

If we can come up with our \$50 million, our share, we're going to be able to tap into federal dollars in a big way that would help stabilize funding for Metro,

which is the most critical aspect of our transportation grid here in Northern Virginia and in the metropolitan region.

Thank you so much, Mr. Secretary, for listening to me tonight, and thank you on behalf of Fairfax County and the members of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. Good luck in your deliberations tonight. Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, sir.
Our next speaker is Mayor Bill Euille.
Welcome, Mayor.

MR. EUILLE: Thank you and good evening. As the Chairman said, welcome to Fairfax County and welcome to Alexandria. Welcome to the congestion out there.

I'm Bill Euille, the Mayor of the City of Alexandria. I'm here tonight to make you aware of the significant negative impact that the proposed Six-Year Improvement Program will have on transportation in Alexandria.

My understanding is that the working draft of the FY 2007-2012 Six-Year Improvement Program was based on revenue estimates, as we've already heard, that do not include any new revenues do to lack of adoption of a state budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1.

I also understand that you were forced to base your funding estimate only on moneys that are actually available, and you could not include any pending revenue proposals. At the same time, you and the General Assembly should be aware of the serious impacts that will result from not sufficiently increasing transportation-dedicated revenues.

The significant adverse impacts of the Six-Year Improvement Program will have on the City of Alexandria include the following: Compared to the existing Six-Year Program, urban system funding for FY 2007 is reduced by 37%, from \$5.5 million to \$3.4 million. Due to this reduction, two critically important projects will be delayed, the purchase of additional buses for the city's quickly-growing DASH Transit System, and the need to widen Eisenhower Avenue between Holland Lane and Stovall Street.

As we see gasoline prices continue to rise, we're also experiencing increased reliance on the use of

transit, particularly in the Northern Virginia region. Without additional buses for Alexandria's DASH transit system, there is no way we can meet this rising demand. Removing the funding for the purchase of buses will lead to further gridlock in Alexandria, and the gridlock will spread to our neighboring jurisdictions.

Any additional delay in beginning the widening of Eisenhower Avenue will bring gridlock to a rapidly-developing section of the city and may delay the opening of two I-95 and 495 ramp connections into the east Eisenhower area that are being constructed as part of the state's Woodrow Wilson Bridge project.

Eisenhower Avenue is the receiving arterial roadway for these ramps. No road ramps are scheduled to open in 2008, and the Telegraph Road ramp is expected to open in 2009. Without the planned widening of Eisenhower Avenue, the local street system will not be able to adequately serve the projected traffic from these ramps.

The state depends substantially on Northern Virginia for their tax revenues that fund the state government. These tax revenues will only grow and will only flow downstate if substantially more transportation funding is provided so that the region's economy can continue its healthy pace of growth.

Prior to the close of the comment period on the Six-Year Program, the City will submit additional written comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on our behalf.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mayor Euille.

The next speaker is Chris Zimmerman from Arlington County. Welcome, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Members of the Board, for the opportunity to speak to you.

Frankly, there's not much I could say that wouldn't be repetitive, so I'll try to be brief because my colleagues have said it all very well, and particularly Chairman Connolly covered the waterfront in his role as NVTC Chair as well.

I think everybody in this room knows, certainly at your table, that we have a problem, we need help, that you are really not in a position to solve for us. We have a fundamental mismatch in this Commonwealth

between the needs we have and the basic infrastructure that's necessary to run the economy of this state and the resources we're committing to it.

I can beg you for money like everybody else. Like everybody else, I'm not very happy with the program that you just described for us in sum, and I understand the fact that you are limited, as we are, by what the General Assembly chooses to do or not do.

We can only hope that as the days and weeks move on, there will be the decision to actually act responsibly and do what is necessary so that this Commonwealth can move forward. In the meantime, I'll note a few of the things that have already been stated, but I'll just briefly restate them.

On the transit side, the match rate as you noted was the lowest ever, 21%. I can't help noting that it looks like it's exactly the flip of what you normally expect on a road project, 80/20 and we've got 20/80. That's a real problem, especially when the thing that most helps our transportation situation is transit. It's not all we need, but in a congested area, an urbanized area like we have in Northern Virginia, that is the investment that makes the most sense for us and what we most need to do to deal with our problems, and we are just so far below what is necessary. I mean, I don't know what to say about it. It's just amazing.

Chairman Connolly mentioned the Metro funding issues, and we are able to carry a lot of people. He did mention what I was going to say about the recent ridership. In fact, a couple of weeks ago there was a day where there was protests on the Mall, and that was the second-highest ridership day in Metro history. It might have been the highest, but it was a holiday weekend, so fortunately a lot of people weren't at work.

Then just two weeks ago we had these three days, and the event of the three days apparently was Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. That was the event, and we have the 6th, 9th, and 14th highest ridership days for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in April with nothing else going on.

So that's what's happening, and we're struggling to stay ahead of that at Metro. The railcars are on their way, but you have to plan way ahead to be

able to have this kind of capacity, and so we're hoping for the railcars that we have on order now to help us out this year.

But we can look forward and see what happens in two years and three years and four years, and if we don't have the resources in place, we're going to be in a lot of trouble, and the situation we're in now will look good by comparison.

Chairman Connolly mentioned the dedicated funding. Again, I recognize that's not something you can do, but everywhere we go we're going to say it again and again. We need dedicated funding. It makes no sense for us to leave federal money on the table and the money of our fellow jurisdictions, because frankly, the \$50 millions we're trying to get here leverages another \$100 million across the river and another \$150 million, so you know, it's like a five to one match, really.

I'll mention a couple of specific things that affect my jurisdiction. You noted, Mr. Secretary, the impact of the cuts, specifically on Secondary construction of 38%, I believe it is, the kind of statewide figure. For Arlington, that cut is 55%, the second most severe in the Commonwealth.

There are things that we are pleased to see are still in there that are really important to the county. We have three bridge projects that have been hanging for a lot of years and put off, and Mr. Connolly certainly has been there I don't know how many different times over the years trying to do something about the Washington Boulevard Bridge, which has made national news stories as the third worst in the country by engineering scales, and we're glad to see that it's at least still in the program.

A couple of administrations ago, it was off the list entirely even though it was on the list as one of the three or four worst bridges in the country in terms of its condition.

And we have a couple of others as well that are in vital need of work. We have not a big project, but a major safety project important to our community with south Glebe Road and the intersection with Arlington Bridge, and we look forward to the opportunity to work with you and with Alexandria to deal with that.

I did also want to mention that we would urge you to include in whatever you do a multi-modal study of I-66. This is something that despite obvious differences across jurisdictions and across people who would be in this room on what ought to be done about I-66, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority did recommend that a multi-modal study be included.

Whatever you think needs to be done about I-66, we clearly have to look at the impact across all modes of everything that's happening in that corridor and ask ourselves the question long term, what do we do in order to move the people that's going to be necessary with all the growth that's occurring and the growth that we expect to continue to occur, how do we cope with that, and we need a multi-modal study that looks at all those different aspects in order to plan responsibly for growth that seems certain to continue and will not be addressed.

No matter what your view is or whether you would agree with my view generally on widening questions, you can't widen anything infinitely, and you do have to figure out how we're going to make all of this work. So I would encourage you to include a multi-modal study of I-66 in the state's Six-Year Plan.

With that, Mr. Secretary, we'll of course send along our formal specific comments on specific details, but I think we'd very much like your help. We recognize the fact that in order for you to help us, there's action in Richmond that has to be taken, and we hope that all of us can work to impress upon people down there the urgency of acting so that the Commonwealth can take advantage of what is really a time of prosperity and not look back at a time when we missed our opportunity to make the investments that would make possible continued prosperity on into the century. Thanks very much.

MR. HOMER: Thank you.

The next speaker is Jane Seeman. Welcome, Mayor, and congratulations.

MS. SEEMAN: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, Secretary Homer and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Certainly, as the town of Vienna is part of Fairfax County, I agree with everything and heartily

endorse everything that Chairman Connolly did ask for and bring to your attention. It all affects us, also.

We have two projects that are underway or will soon be underway scheduled to be constructed in 2007, and that's Beulah Road and Branch Road projects.

However, because of cost overruns in the Beulah Road projects, some moneys had to be borrowed from the Cottage Street rebuild, which is in the upcoming Six-Year Program, so we request that that money be replaced in the Cottage Street.

Cottage Street is being rebuilt in two segments. The first segment was rebuilt in 1996, and the next schedule that is in the next part of it is in this next program, so we just request that that money be replaced for that project, and that's about it.

I just wanted to congratulate this wonderful new map. We're inviting everybody. This is, "Come home to Virginia." They're going to come home, and how are they going to get there? I just think it's important.

This is the showcase. We're showcasing Virginia and Jamestown and all of us are working very hard on these projects, and I think it would be such a shame for people to come -- I know you know that, but I just want to say it anyway because I think it's very important.

Thank you very much.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mayor.

The next speaker is Dave Snyder. Welcome, Mayor.

MR. SNYDER: Thank you very much. We have copies of our remarks. It's my honor but not pleasure to be here this weekend to represent the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, whose jurisdictions include Alexandria, Falls Church, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Arlington County, Loudoun County, the City of Manassas and Manassas Park, Prince William County, and contains representatives as well from the Virginia General Assembly.

This group, which represents really most of the people in Northern Virginia, has produced something called the Transaction Plan 2030, and it's very clear that even at the old funding levels we were faced with a crisis, and at the new funding levels that crisis is more than here. Our statement is very similar to what Chairman Connolly has already indicated, but I want to make a couple additional points.

Of course, we express our appreciation for those few projects which you are able to fund, but as is very clear, the available resources are far below current needs.

One could really analogize this to the levees in New Orleans. While the failure there was catastrophic on one day, the reality is that our transportation system up here fails each and every day under current conditions, and that will worsen under the obvious funding situation that we're in today.

We of course make several comments about the size of the population here, the extent to which a typical job in Northern Virginia throws off 50% more taxes than a job elsewhere in the state, and of course that money is used elsewhere in the state for things like providing police and schools and other things. So the failure to adequately fund transportation is not just failure in Northern Virginia; it's a statewide failure.

As I said, the system imposes already due to its day in and day out failures a hidden tax on everyone in Northern Virginia in terms of lost time with their families and lost productivity on the job.

We estimate with gas taxes now up in the \$3 range, the increase in the amount of money that leaves Northern Virginia to pay for gas when the average cost of gas goes to \$3 from \$2.25 is \$400 million a year. That's money that is gone forever from this region, and it's absolutely essential that we use a small portion of that money to return it to provide the infrastructure that our employers have to have.

I work in the private sector during the day, and I can tell you that the private sector is losing its patience with our inability to provide basic infrastructure. Our companies deal in a global economy and yet live in a transportation infrastructure that is barely 19th Century, let alone 20th or 21st Century.

We outlined the obvious issues, the failure to fund necessary highway capacity, the failure to fund critical public transportation. This goes from the largest counties to the smallest cities that I represent, continuing to impose on our people an unacceptable level of incompetence in the ability of government to provide basic governmental infrastructure services.

I would say as well that this is not just a nice-to-have thing. This is not just a financial issue. This is a critical issue of public safety. The transportation systems will be relied upon in Northern Virginia to provide a high measure of response to major catastrophes and evacuation. Those systems are already breaking down a day-to-day basis. Imagine what would happen with a major natural catastrophe or a major terrorist event in this region.

So let me conclude that for all of the reasons which you all know, this is an extremely painful process. I would hope that at the end of your calculation of the numbers and your submission of the report that you make clear to everyone involved in this process that we're talking about jobs, we're talking about the future of Virginia's economy, and ultimately we're talking about lives.

Thank you very much, and I appreciate the opportunity to spend a few minutes with you this evening. Please, please, please, when you have enough to go on, don't hesitate to say what the right thing to do is. Thanks.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mayor.

The next speaker is Tom Blaser from Prince William County.

MR. BLASER: Secretary Homer, Commissioner Whirley and members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, good evening. My name is Tom Blaser, Prince William County Transportation Chief. Chairman Connaughton sends his regrets.

I'd like to start by thanking you for the work you put into the Six-Year Plan and the opportunity for me to speak about Prince William County's priorities this year.

Over the past 15 years, citizens of Prince William County have approved over \$250 million in bonds to address local road needs. We have another \$300 million proposed to be on the ballot this fall, and I've got to tell you that estimate went up over \$50 million in just the last four months, so the need to act is critical.

The citizens of the county are well aware of the congestion problems we face today and in the future. By passing the last five referendums, they've also shown that they're willing to pay the price to do whatever it takes to fix these deficiencies. It's now time for the Commonwealth to make some serious investments into the system here in Northern Virginia.

Realizing that funding is unsure due to the General Assembly delays on the transportation budget, I'll just get right to the point and speak to Prince William's priorities in the plan.

First are the projects that look good in the Plan and are currently funded, Route 234 widening, Route 123 Bridge over the Occoquan, the Route 123 interchange, as well as the U.S.M.C. Heritage Center access.

Route 234, you guys have been doing a good job. We're making steady progress over decades. There's light at the end of the tunnel, to use another analogy, but we've got to get to the finish line. There's still one big bottleneck, and we've just got to finish that project off.

MR. HOMER: That's three analogies in one sentence.

MR. BLASER: Am I over my limit?

The U.S.M.C. Heritage Center, I got to tell you our board just approved that on Tuesday. We'll be down and seeing a lot of you folks I guess it's May 18th to make sure you're going to back up the local funds that were put up front on that, very important on that Heritage Center project.

Our second batch of projects are what we call the "ready to go" projects. These are projects where public hearings have been held, designs are done, and in some cases right of way has been purchased. They're the Gainseville interchange at I-66 and 29, the section of I-66 between the 234 bypass and 29 to implement that HOV project; Neabsco Creek Bridge over Route 1. If Ms. Bard (ph.) was here, she'd tell you it's going to fall in. And Route 29 widening from Godwin to the Fauquier County line.

Just to emphasize again on Gainesville, this is a regional need. It is just not a Prince William need. A fender bender or a slow train on there can back up traffic from Centreville to Warrenton. That's not an

exaggeration. It's reached its limits of acceptability.

Lastly, there are those projects that are in development that we need to really jumpstart and get them to construction. That's the Route 1 widening. That's corridor-wide throughout the county. I-66 HOV lanes out to Haymarket, as well as the interchange, which I've got say also compliments the 15 project that we're doing with county bond funds; I-95 HOV extension from Route 234 down to Stafford County. The Route 234 bypass north and the western transportation corridor.

Thank you for your time and efforts on these crucial transportation matters. We at Prince William County look forward to working with you to maintain all projects on target and on time to solve the increasingly serious mobility and air quality problems facing this region and the Commonwealth.

In order for us to accomplish this, we must realize that additional permanent funding must be identified by the Commonwealth. The longer we wait to construct these projects, the more costly they become and the further away we get from realizing our common goal of keeping Virginia moving.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Blaser.

The next speaker is John Bishop. Mr. Bishop, welcome.

MR. BISHOP: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and members of the Board. I serve as the Transportation Planner for Frederick County, and I'm happy to make the trip out here to get a chance to say what we've discovered in the program.

A little bit of background: We've just completed our first long-range transportation plan, as we are a new NPO, based on the 2000 census, so the projections for which we had to compare this particular program with that were provided by VDOT were only for 2011/2012 as far as having specific projections, and of course the current program.

Unfortunately, after listening to the previous testimony, I think fondly of the 55% reductions or even the 20% primary and 40% secondary, because what we have experienced has been far more extreme, but of course our dollars are already a lot smaller.

Over the next 25 years we were previously

projected early last year -- this was before the new projections in November and also before the new federal bill -- to have a total of about \$60 million between now and 2030. That's to address \$2 billion in needs, something less than 3%. So that's already a rather frustrating situation as a new NPO beginning a new federal process to go into.

Now here we are, the first program for which we can expect to see funds that were projected to us. We know the federal revenue is up. I was unaware of the new state projections as far as fuel revenues being down. I did see on the VDOT website the 20% and the 40% reductions, so I did expect a proportional decrease.

However, of the federal funds of about \$3.4 million, none are reflected in the '07-2012 Program. Of the primary funds, which are just under \$2 million, none are reflected in the new Program, and the \$2 million in secondary, those are all gone as well. So you can see where I would think a 55% reduction looks pretty good at this point.

On top of that, just in the county the Route 277 widening, which runs from about the edge of Clark County into the town of Stephens City, hooking up with I-81 formerly had nearly \$7 million in the current program. The new program reduces that to \$1.73 million. 55% looks pretty good.

Based on these observations, the Frederick County Board of Supervisors has passed a resolution requesting that the Commonwealth Transportation Board and VDOT do try to revisit the program. They do understand the state situation. However, we would have expected more of a proportional decrease, rather than outright.

When you're already looking at 3% against \$2 million, to lose everything in the first two years you expected to see something is very discouraging to say the least. It makes it very difficult for the county to move forward. Everyone is well aware of how much impact this area is having out in Frederick County and Winchester and the Metropolitan area.

We got passed a resolution, the Frederick County Board of Supervisors, and the Chairman, Richard Schickle, has attached a letter which I have to submit here today requesting that revisitation and also requesting perhaps more of a formal response as far as why we are affected so severely, even though I do understand, especially in front of this group, how small those amounts of money are, it is of course very frustrating and it does impact us quite severely in the face of already very, very, very great pressures.

Thank you very much.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Bishop. Is that the letter from the Mayor? Okay. We will get a response for you.

The next speaker is Bob Chase of the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance.

Welcome, Mr. Chase.

MR. CHASE: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. It's always a pleasure to be with you and I know you have had a long day so I will try to be as brief as possible.

The Transportation Alliance has presented commentary at about twenty of these proceedings over the years. Reviewing draft plans in advance is always frustrating because so much of what needs to be done is not reflected in the plan. It's also frustrating because even with electronic versions being available, it is incredibly difficult for any private citizen or organization to comprehend the bigger picture as to what the Plan really does, and more importantly what it does not.

The Alliance believes an overview of this nature would generate much better-informed public input. Such a summary would also be beneficial to elected officials, particularly state legislators, who seem to feel that enough funding is already available or that a couple hundred million dollars per year will address a couple billion dollars per year shortfall.

Seeing how little is being done and how long it takes even to do a little might open some eyes and some minds. Projects in the Draft Plan we commend that urge to be expedited include in the I-66 corridor the Gainseville/Route 29 interchange, the I-95 flyover, as well as widening I-66 in both directions inside the Beltway, which perhaps is the only corridor in the nation in which we seem to ignore the fact that people actually move in both directions.

The I-66 corridor -- EIS outside the Beltway

also should be jumpstarted. The fourth I-95 lane in each direction between Newington and Route 23 is essential.

The Commonwealth and the Department must take a greater leadership role in strategic planning, identifying and championing key missing links such western and eastern regional parkways, new Potomac River crossings, and other north/south corridors is essential.

Other priorities should include advancing alternatives to ancient and outmoded corridors such as Routes 9 and 15 in Loudoun County, which we have discussed with state and local officials recently.

As has been pointed out, authorized BRAC relocations changed the picture significantly in Northern Virginia and increased the necessity to complete the Fairfax County Parkway's EPG component to fund the Fair Lakes Parkway/Monument Drive interchange and develop a comprehensive plan to upgrade the Parkway to more of a limited-access facility to meet increased north/south demand.

Time is not on Northern Virginia's side. While the ability to widen some existing corridors will remain for years, the ability to identify and protect alternatives will not.

Finally, I would like to complement the Department for the great progress that it's made in recent years under your leadership, Mr. Secretary, under former Shucet and current Commissioner Whirley and the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

I think great progress has been made. I think everybody would acknowledge that VDOT still is not perfect, but I think the point is that there are thousands of good people working very hard in the Department to do good things for the people of the Commonwealth, and that all these people need, or one of the important things they need is the resources to get the job done, which are currently being denied to them.

So again, I would like to compliment you and the Department for the good work that you're doing and hope that the General Assembly recognizes that not just with proclamations but with some real money to do some real things that have needed to be done for a long time.

Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Chase.

The next speaker is Jim Parmelee. Welcome, Mr. Parmelee.

MR. PARMELEE: Hello. I'm here representing Republicans United for Tax Relief, and I've been listening to the speakers and listening to your presentation, and I have sort of a little quiz.

Let me ask everybody up front who here believes that the General Assembly will never, ever pass a budget this year? Okay, you're all conceding that there will in fact be a budget. That's about the only way that your Six-Year Plan makes sense is if the General Assembly pretty much gives up.

So let me ask my second question, which is how many of you really believe that your Six-Year Plan that you've talked about tonight is really the final number that you're going to be using? I didn't think so. And part of the reason is you kept saying during your talk you pointed out, "We're required to use these numbers, we're required to use these numbers."

I'm not necessarily sure that's true, but you repeated it so many times that it almost seemed like you were trying to convince everybody that this was the final number when you must know, all of you have conceded that this is not the final number that you're going to be using.

So if in fact you believe that you are required to use the numbers you're using, why not put together a second plan with a reasonable estimate of what's going to come out of these negotiations, and I think you'll have an entirely different view of this situation.

Now, the reality is the reason you're proposing this lowball number is to scare everybody into the idea that if we don't raise taxes, we're not going to have roads. Well, it seems that we have lots and lots and lots of taxes, but not lots and lots and lots of roads, and it seems to me that every time we raise taxes, we don't get all of the things that we were promised from the last tax increase.

We were told that this last big tax increase, the one that Warner proposed, was essentially going to be the big one for our generation, the big tax increase. This was going to solve pretty much all of our problems and it was crucial, it was necessary. The government would fall apart if we didn't do it, but if we passed this, it was going to be a revolution for Virginia.

All right, you got your tax increase, and here we are asking for another huge, massive tax increase. And a gas tax? Come on, come on. We're paying \$3 a gallon and we're talking about a gas tax? That's just irresponsible.

What we need to do is if you think transportation is important -- I do and I'm sure you do -- go back together and say, "Why don't we start spending some of the money we already have of the huge surplus and the huge tax increases that we've already imposed on Virginians, why don't we spend some of that?"

If transportation is important, and it is, why don't we take some of the money that we already have? Why is it always this is the last thing to be served? "We have a tax increase or else there's no transportation." That just seems to be irresponsible.

We also had a referendum in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, and the voters said overwhelmingly no to a tax hike, because the voters understood that you guys take enough money out of our pockets. There's plenty of money for transportation if you spend it wisely. They understood that.

They also understood that there's no way to guarantee that taxes raised for transportation actually go to transportation, something Governor Kaine has conceded during his campaign and talking about how he wouldn't raise taxes unless he could guarantee the money was locked away.

Well, that was one campaign promise I guess that was tossed away because he's proposing tax increases without really any guarantee that they will in fact go to transportation.

The people have already spoken. The people said no to tax increases, and at Governor Kaine's town hall meetings, the early ones where he was actually asking for input as opposed to saying, "Here's what I want to do," when you looked around the room, everyone seemed to want a solution to our transportation problem, but no one had a consensus. Some people wanted rail. Some people wanted buses instead of rail. Some people wanted roads. Some people didn't want sprawl. Some people wanted more

development.

You know, there was no consensus. I don't think you guys could have gotten 51% in that room for anything, so when some people would say, "Northern Virginians know there's a transportation problem and we want solutions and the people have spoken," yes the people have spoken.

They don't want tax increases. They believe that you have enough money, but you need to spend it wisely and that you need to go back to the drawing board, a drawing board evidently with much higher numbers than the ones you guys have been talking about tonight. Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Parmelee.

The next speaker is Calvin Grow from the town of Leesburg. Welcome, Mr. Grow.

MR. GROW: Secretary Homer and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board, my name is Calvin Grow. I'm a Transportation Engineer for the town of Leesburg, and I'm here representing the Mayor, who had a meeting scheduled for tonight and could not make it.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify to you today regarding transportation needs for the town of Leesburg. We look forward to working with you next year to help manage the region's transportation problems.

I'd like to pass out a resolution that was passed by the town council regarding the transportation needs for the town of Leesburg, and what I'd like to do is focus on two particular projects tonight.

One you've probably heard before many times is the Battlefield Parkway completion between Route 7 and Kincaid Boulevard, and also the completion of the 7/15 Bypass widening and the flyover at Sycolin Road.

These proposed projects are in the Northern Virginia 2020 Plan and 2030 Plan, and are supported by the General Assembly representatives in Loudoun County and also Congressman Frank Wolf. The council is concerned about the estimated construction date for the Battlefield Parkway, and currently in the Six-Year Plan it shows a completion date of 2010, or a starting construction date of 2010, and we're asking that that project be moved up to a construction date of 2008 with a completion of 2010. That project is fully funded currently in the Six-Year

Plan, and last week or two weeks ago we had a public hearing on that project.

Finally, I'd like to talk about the construction and widening of the 7/15 Bypass, including the flyover to Sycolin Road. As you know, we have a traffic signal on our bypass and it's been there for a number of years. It's causing major congestion for the commuters, especially for commuters going to western Loudoun from the Shenandoah Valley and from central Maryland passing through the Leesburg Bypass to employment centers to eastern Loudoun and Fairfax Counties.

The town of Leesburg has listened to the growing outcry from Leesburg citizens that traffic safety problems on Leesburg Bypass are dramatically escalating, and that increasing traffic congestion is causing inordinate delays in travel time.

Parts of the Leesburg Bypass, and the maps I've passed out to you illustrates that, parts of the bypass have now reached VDOT's 2015 traffic projections.

The Sycolin intersection also has experienced a high accident rate, one of the highest in the town for the last ten years.

The town of Leesburg respectfully requests that these critical projects be funded, especially the bypass widening. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated by the town. I appreciate you listening to me tonight. Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Grow.
Our next speaker is Mr. Alf Harf. Welcome,
Mr. Harf.

MR. HARF: Good evening, Secretary Homer and Members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. I am Al Harf. I'm appearing here this evening on behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission. Our testimony is being transmitted electronically, so I'm going to just paraphrase it for you in the interest of time.

The first point I want to make is that the PRTC member jurisdictions understand full well that you cannot spend money that you don't have and that that places you in the unenviable position of having to make painful choices, choices that I think could be likened to a form of triage.

And I as a speaker also have a choice to make, which is to either focus on whether or not the triage choices that you're making in the proposed Six-Year Program are the right ones or instead focus on what the consequences of an inadequately funded program are in order to heighten public awareness of what looms if the General Assembly fails to act. PRTC's jurisdictions think that that second choice is the right one for this evening's discussion.

Inadequate assistance for public transportation by the Commonwealth is not new, but as you've heard from previous speakers, the proposed Six-Year Program represents a new low.

In contrast to Secretary Homer's observation that the General Assembly's stated aim is to cover 95% of eligible transit expenses, this current Six-Year Program would only cover 21% of capital and 47% of operating assistance, with further declines in ensuing years. Ironically, these cuts come at a time when the demand for public transportation continues to rise.

The drop in state assistance will represent painful choices for the PRTC member jurisdictions. Those are choices that we will need to make because this Six-Year Program constitutes a very significant hit compared to our budget provisions.

What are the choices that we can make? The first choice is to dip into local resources in order to compensate for the reduced state assistance. That's not a practical option, since those same member jurisdictions have been increasing local assistance for public transportation services at a rate of more than three times what the rate of assistance has been from the state over the course of the last five years.

Other choices that we have are to cut services or to raise fares, both of which we think are antithetical to sound public policy. That leaves us with only two other recourses: we can differ capital investments or we can issue debt. Painfully, those are the choices that are looming as the most likely possibilities for PRTC.

Buses that are slated for acquisition in 2007 could be postponed, requiring PRTC's continuing use of buses that are now approaching 18 years old.

With regard to the issuance of debt, we have a

planned expansion of our bus maintenance facility to accommodate the continuing growth of our operation, and in light of the fact that current conditions don't allow us to defer that, that's an investment that rather than doing it on a pay-as-you-go basis, which would be our preference, we will wind up having to do on a debt finance basis.

Like other areas in Northern Virginia, PRTC's member governments bear a lot more of the costs of public transportation than other areas of the Commonwealth because traffic levels and trip-making patterns in Northern Virginia demand it.

It's bad enough that Northern Virginia suffers on account of inadequate state assistance for public transportation, but that really does not tell the whole story. Chairman Connolly in his opening remarks made the very potent observation that as Northern Virginia goes, so goes the state's economy, and consequently this reduction in state assistance for public transportation does not bode well not only for Northern Virginia but for the Commonwealth at large.

Stated more bluntly, the General Assembly's continuing failure to increase state assistance for public transportation on a sustained basis will have profound adverse consequences for Northern Virginia and the Commonwealth. The time for responsible action is now. Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Harf.

The next speaker is Shean Robinson. Welcome, Mr. Robinson.

MR. ROBINSON: Thank you for the opportunity to speak here. I'm representing the South County Federation, which represents a small portion of south Fairfax County, just south of the Fairfax County Parkway and east of 123.

Our area has endured an enormous amount of growth over the past couple of years, which has included the Mole Hill Developments and the Lorton Station Developments, which has brought in over 6,000 new housing units and no new roads before the houses were in.

Recently, some of the nice improvements that have happened by VDOT are the 123 widening project at the Occoquan River Bridge, the Route 1 widening south of Fort

Belvoir, and the Lorton Road project, which is going on now which has helped our community. But our community is still in need of assistance with our transportation needs.

Currently it takes me an hour to do about a 15 mile ride in the morning for my commuting time. Some of the things that our Federation has gotten together and would like VDOT to address is one, the fourth lane on I-95 and to expedite the completion of that project.

Also, a cloverleaf exit at Lorton Road off of I-95, which is currently not on the VDOT plans, but it is on the Fairfax County plans. We would like for you to add that for near-future completion also.

Also, the restoration of the Gunston Cove Road Bridge, which was recently closed due to structural issues. That is a major transportation roadway for our community and that is a major bridge that we would like restored.

Also, at Route 1 the railroad bridge at I-95. Currently, that is a four-lane highway, but it narrows at the railroad bridge, and it's a clogging point for traffic leaving the south part of Fairfax County and even Fort Belvoir.

All of these issues, if they're not addressed as we are still building in our part of the county, and with the base closings and realignments for Fort Belvoir, these are some of the things that will assist in at least maintaining our quality of life and not allowing it to worsen anymore. That's it. Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Robinson. I appreciate you taking the time to come and address us tonight.

The next and last signed up speaker is Allen Muchnick with the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation.

Welcome, Mr. Muchnick.

MR. MUCHNICK: Well, thank you Secretary Homer, Members of the Board, and Happy Bike Month.

I'm Allen Muchnick with the Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation. Since 1999, ACST has advocated expedient and permanent solutions to traffic congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway by better traffic management and public transportation options.

In particular, expanded HOV hours could

instantly end traffic congestion with almost no expense or disruption while providing free-flowing travel lanes for improved Express Bus service.

Morever, converting all four I-66 travel lanes into full-time High Occupancy Toll or HOT operation could keep I-66 permanently uncongested, yet provide access for all autos at all times, provide an excellent regional Express Bus facility and generate much-needed transportation revenue for the Commonwealth.

Congressman Frank Wolf and Tom Davis are pushing an expedited environmental review for squeezing a third travel lane into westbound I-66, but the environmental impact statement and USDOT record of decision that authorized I-66 inside the Beltway as a multi-modal corridor in 1977, soundly rejected more than two travel lanes in each direction.

Moreover, as a condition for lifting a courtimposed injunction on I-66 construction, Virginia Governor Godwin promised USDOT Secretary Coleman that Virginia, and I quote, "will construct no highway lanes in the I-66 right of way beyond the four which you have approved," end quote. And that these four constructed lanes would be, quote, "similar to that of the George Washington Parkway."

In March 2005, the report of the "Idea 66" or I-66 Inside the Beltway's feasibility study, called "Idea 66," issued with neither external policy guidance nor peer review, failed to establish any legitimate grounds or significant public betterment for their recommended third westbound lane requested by Congressmen Wolf and Davis.

In fact, the report's master concept evaluation matrix on Page 6-35 clearly showed several non-widening alternatives to be superior overall to the recommended third westbound travel lane, even with better traffic management.

Moreover, by deriving its Idea 66 problem statement entirely from a June 2003 letter from Congressmen Wolf and Davis, the Idea 66 report made a total sham of both of its recommendations and the public involvement process.

In January 2006, both the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board in allowing VDOT to proceed with an I-66, quote/unquote, "spot improvement study," directed that, and the following is largely quoted directly. Number one, the "spot improvements don't preclude a third Metrorail track and Express Bus operations."

Two, "all aspects of the project" comply fully with NEPA.

Three, "any proposed construction can occur within the existing right of way and maintain any adjacent parkland and the Custis Trail" and not degrade safety.

Four, the study evaluated "HOV enforcement areas" and "a continuous 12-foot shoulder" and can coordinate "with the ongoing efforts to develop a regional evacuation plan."

ACST supports these directives and the further recommendation of both bodies that, quote, "funding be sought for a long-range multi-modal environmental document that will address the public transportation needs for the I-66 multi-modal corridor." Some desired features of this study are described further in my written remarks.

In summary, we support the expedient, permanent, and cost-effective solutions to traffic congestion on I-66 inside the Beltway by a better traffic management and public transportation options, but we oppose a third westbound travel lane as unnecessary, ineffective and unwarranted.

Thank you for your consideration and for holding this public hearing.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Muchnick.

With apologies, I know that Margaret Vanderhye had signed up. I missed the sheet somehow, so our next speaker will be Margaret Vanderhye, and I would like to note that Ms. Vanderhye is a member of the both the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and also a member of the START task force that has looked at transportation financing on a statewide basis.

Welcome, Ms. Vanderhye.

MS. VANDERHYE: It's good to be here.

I am Margaret Vanderhye of McLean and I serve as the governor's citizen appointee to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and my role here tonight is to report that the citizens are not happy.

As you, Mr. Secretary, and previous speakers have noted, absent any resolution to the current budget

negotiations in the General Assembly, we will have decreasing funding levels, decreasing mobility, and increasing frustration for the foreseeable future.

As I was leaving to come here tonight, there was a television reporter breathlessly encouraging all of the listeners to "send us your worst congestion and commuting story and we'll put it on the air," so the word is out.

Last fall I did serve on the Virginia Senate Finance Task Force that recommended alternatives for Transportation Funding, known as START. Both the Senate and the Governor subsequently introduced and have offered amendments to legislation that would provide about \$1 billion annually for transportation.

The alternatives offered by some of the House leadership, while acknowledging that we need more money for transportation, rely in part on cuts to the general fund and on a one time so-called "surplus," and are woefully insufficient by comparison to the Governor's and the Senate's plan, in our opinion.

The Virginia General Assembly last adopted a comprehensive transportation funding increase 20 years ago, and without the kind of dedicated sustainable revenue sources called for in the Senate's and the Governor's recommendations, the entire transportation budget will be consumed by maintenance requirements in about ten years.

Here in the Northern Virginia, the economic engine of the Commonwealth, we have identified \$15 billion in unmet and real transportation needs, according to the recently-completed Transaction 2030 Transportation Plan.

Over the course of preparing that plan, we surveyed in a scientific survey citizens who reported to us their priorities for transportation projects as well as their willingness to pay for transportation improvements that they deem both fair and have an immediate and sustainable impact on their own driving habits and their own commuting.

In the face of declining taxes and fees, I think you mentioned \$221 million, Mr. Secretary, and the increasing costs of construction and maintenance, we need the sustainable, long-term funding for our roads. We need a sustainable federal match for our Metro, mentioned by Mr. Connolly and by Mr. Zimmerman to provide the match for

the federal dollars to the tune of \$50 million a year. In short, we need the promise of some congestion relief.

As you pointed out, Mr. Secretary, in your presentation, without sufficient revenues, the impacts will be felt hardest in the localities. Those are my colleagues on the Transportation Authority, the people who know that despite the decline in transportation revenue, they still have to pay the teachers, the fire still has to be extinguished and the ambulance still has to show up on time.

As citizens, we are increasingly skeptical of proposals that rely on a promise of endless surplus revenue, or that growth can cover any and all programs, no matter how essential they may be to the economic and social vitality of our region or of our state as a whole. That thinking takes us over the real "bridge to nowhere," and the citizens are not impressed.

We commend you for your attention to our transportation needs here in Northern Virginia, and we are aware of the constraints that you are operating under, especially with the current debacle in the General Assembly and the recent activities of today.

You can rest assured that long after this session of the General Assembly is gaveled to adjournment, we are going to remember which of our legislators helped to bring about long-term solutions for our traffic congestion and who tried to sell us short with an expedient but ultimately inadequate fix.

Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Ms. Vanderhye. Are there any other speakers in the audience? Delegate Martin.

MR. MARTIN: I'm Delegate Dave Martin, and I wanted to answer the question that was posed earlier as to what happened to the surplus. Well, the surplus got appropriated. That's what the Commonwealth does with revenue.

It was appropriated because of underfunding in core services in this state for years. Now, I served in the Gilmore administration and served for a time in the Warner administration, and the whole time I was down there from 2000 to 2002 «, I was cutting budgets, year after year, cycle after cycle, and I believe that cycle,

Secretary Homer, continued after my departure.

So this surplus that purportedly exists was placed back into the core services that the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia need.

Now, there's an old saying that World War II was really a continuation of a poorly-concluded World War I. We didn't get the job done in 2004. We made a compromise and we didn't get the transportation. So money was put back into core services and there was no money provided for transportation.

These are critical facts that all of us need to keep in mind as we do this. I know myself and a number of my colleagues are committed to getting the necessary funding to get transportation and traffic moving in Northern Virginia, and we need a little help.

And trust me, if there was a surplus down there, Speaker Howe would find it, Senator Chichester would find it, the Governor would find it and it would be placed in transportation. But unfortunately, it does not exist and has been put into other important things and remember this: Virginia is still I believe 41st in its tax burden among all of the 50 states. We do a good job with our money. We're the best managed state in the Commonwealth.

We have a lot going for us, and you cannot save your way to prosperity. You have to invest. And we're going to have to invest in transportation if we're going to keep this Commonwealth moving in the direction it needs to move.

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Delegate Martin.

There was one other. Yes, sir.

ROGER DIEDRICH: Mr. Secretary, Members of the Board, I'm Roger Diedrich. I'm the Chairman of the Virginia chapter of the Sierra Club. I'm just sort of reacting and wasn't really prepared to speak, but our view of the 2025 plan that I expect you will be using as a basis for drawing out projects was that this was a really well-written front end on the plan, lots of good language in their about the way planning should be done, but then there was a list of projects that was attached to that that had no relation to the front end of the plan, and when you get to the point when you figure out what number

you are going to use to select your projects probably from that laundry list, we'd ask that you use a well-crafted set of performance standards such as reducing vehicle miles traveled per capita, better accessibility for citizens, and I think if we have a better process I think that means we have better confidence that we're getting a better set of projects out of it.

If you do that, I don't think you're going to be putting truck lanes on I-81; I don't think you're going to be funding any piece of the western transportation corridor, such as the Battlefield Bypass, because I don't think it would pass muster under any kind of performance standard.

One of my pet peeves for Northern Virginia is the Hot Lanes Project. I don't think that that's a halfbaked project and I don't think it's fair to consider it a low-cost project because it would be paid for one way or another.

I don't think it's fair to call it a transit project because the transit element is not there. So the public has been left in the dark on that project, and I could say more about it, but I'm not really prepared to.

I also agree with the people from Arlington that widening I-66 is a bad idea. There's lot better ways to handle that project with a lot less money than what they've planned.

As one positive thing I'd like you to add when you do get a pot of money is look at doing preliminary engineering and environmental studies on putting rail on the Wilson Bridge. I think in the long term, that's something that will help the region build a transit network is really where we really ought to go.

Given the issues with global warming and energy shortages, we've really got to build a transit network and stop building the auto-dependent network that keeps popping up everywhere across the region.

Thank you.

MR. HOMER: Thank you, Mr. Diedrich.

Anybody else want to speak? Any members of the Board want to make a brief comment?

If not, I would like to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedule.

I would like to make one observation. Going

back to the presentation, simply to restore the Six-Year Program to where it is today it costs \$870 million just to get back to where we are today. I'll close on that note. Thank you for your time.

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(Whereupon, at approximately 9:04 o'clock p.m., the Public Meeting was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Nathanael D. Riveness, the Certified Verbatim Reporter who reported the foregoing proceedings, do hereby certify that they are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and ability; and that I have no interest in said proceedings, financial or otherwise, nor through relationship with any of the parties in interest or their counsel.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 9th day of May, 2006.

NATHANAEL D. RIVENESS Certified Verbatim Reporter